

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 210920

EXDIS-HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE FOR MILITARY ADDEES

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR
SUBJECT: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

1. PORTUGAL: AFM ASSEMBLY TURMOIL MAY SPARK COUP

EMBASSY LISBON REPORTS THAT CONTROVERSY OVER THE AFM ASSEMBLY SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 5 OVERSHADOWED AZEVEDO'S CONTINUING EFFORTS TO FORM A COALITION GOVERNMENT.

--IN WHAT WOULD BE A MAJOR SETBACK TO THE ANTUNES GROUP, ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF FABIAO HAS REPORTEDLY BOWED TO PRESSURE FROM COSTA GOMES TO APPROVE HOLDING THE ASSEMBLY ON SCHEDULE AS CONSTITUTED, THUS ALLOWING IT TO RETAIN ITS PRO-GONCALVES AND PRO-COMMUNIST MAJORITY.

--THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE HAS DENIED WIDESPREAD RUMORS THAT THE ASSEMBLY IS TO BE POSTPONED UNTIL SEPTEMBER 9.

THE EMBASSY ALSO NOTES ONE REPORT OF A COUP SEPTEMBER 5 AND
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COMMENTS:

--WHILE WE HAVE NO SOLID INFORMATION, AN ANTUNES SUPPORTER EARLIER THIS WEEK INDICATED THE GROUP WOULD MOVE

IF THEY COULD NOT BRING FABIAO TO THEIR SIDE.

--IF A RUMP AFM ASSEMBLY IS HELD SEPTEMBER 5 IN THE
FACE OF AN ARMY BOYCOTT, IT WOULD BE A GOOD TIME TO
GRAB RADICAL DELEGATES.

MEANWHILE, THE EFFORTS OF AZEVEDO TO PUT TOGETHER A GOVERN-
MENT WILL GET NOWHERE UNTIL THE MILITARY HAVE RESOLVED THE
QUESTION OF GONCALVES AND COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN THE GOVERN-
MENT. IT SEEMS UNLIKELY AT THIS JUNCTURE THAT ANY MEANING-
FUL AGREEMENT AMONG THE PARTIES CAN BE REACHED WITHOUT A
MAJOR CHANGE IN THE SOCIALIST POSITION. (CONFIDENTIAL)
LISBON 5153; (CONFIDENTIAL) LISBON 5168 (LIMDIS), 9/4.)

2. MIDDLE EAST

A. SADAT DEFENDS DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT, SCORES SYRIANS

IN A SPEECH, SEPTEMBER 4, A DEFIANT PRESIDENT SADAT VIGOR-
OUSLY DEFENDED THE SINAI DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT EMPHASIZING
THAT IT IS A VITAL STEP TOWARD PEACE. SADAT:

--CASTIGATED THE SOVIETS, PALESTINIANS, AND IRAQIS FOR
ATTACKING THE AGREEMENT;

--SINGLED OUT THE SYRIANS FOR ESPECIALLY SHARP CRITI-
CISM;

--EMPHASIZED THAT THE AGREEMENT DID NOT TAKE EGYPT OUT
OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT, CLAIMING THAT HE COULD
HAVE RECOVERED ALL OF THE SINAI IN EXCHANGE FOR A DEC-
LARATION OF NONBELLIGERENCY.

ACCORDING TO EMBASSY CAIRO, SADAT WAS IN A GRAVE AND EMO-
TIONAL MOOD, AWARE THAT HE IS ENGAGED IN A BATTLE TO PROTECT
EGYPT'S POSITION IN THE ARAB WORLD.
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EMBASSY COMMENT: DESPITE THE RHETORIC, SADAT DID NOT PRO-
VIDE HIS SUPPORTERS MUCH AMMUNITION WITH WHICH TO DEFEND THE
AGREEMENT. HE MUST CONTINUE TO EXPECT STRONG ATTACKS FROM
THE SYRIANS, PALESTINIANS, AND IRAQIS. SADAT DID, HOWEVER,
PLACE THE ARABS ON NOTICE THAT EGYPT WOULD NOT ALLOW "TRADI-
TIONAL ARAB NEGATIVISM" TO DETER IT FROM PURSUING A PRAGMA-
TIC AND REALISTIC POLICY. (UNCLASSIFIED) CAIRO 8717; (CON-
FIDENTIAL) CAIRO 8718, 9/4.)

B. SYRIA: BAATH PARTY CONDEMNS AGREEMENT

COMMENTING ON THE BAATH PARTY COMMAND COMMUNIQUE CONDEMNING
THE INTERIM AGREEMENT, EMBASSY DAMASCUS NOTES:

--THE COMMUNIQUE REFLECTS THE SARG'S DESIRE TO ENHANCE ITS OWN LEADERSHIP ROLE BY EXPLOITING JORDANIAN-PALESTINIAN FRUSTRATION AND ENCOURAGING A UNITED FRONT UNDER SYRIAN AUSPICES.

--DESPITE ITS STRONG RESERVATIONS THE STATEMENT LEAVES THE DOOR OPEN TO FURTHER PEACE NEGOTIATIONS.

--THE GENERAL TONE IS RESTRAINED (A VIEW LATER REINFORCED BY KHADDAM, WHO MADE A POINT OF TELLING THE AMBASSADOR THAT HE HOPED THE US APPRECIATED THE DRAFTERS' RESTRAINT.)

--THE COMMUNIQUE MAY BE SOMETHING OF A SMOKESCREEN DIRECTED AGAINST REJECTIONIST AND PARTICULARLY IRAQI CRITICISM. (CONFIDENTIAL) DAMASCUS 3455, 9/4.)

C. ISRAEL SEEKS DELAY OF PRO-ISRAELI RESOLUTION

A BELGIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL TOLD EMBASSY BRUSSELS SEPTEMBER 4 THAT ISRAEL HAD REQUESTED THE BELGIANS NOT TO INTRODUCE A PRO-ISRAELI RESOLUTION AT THE UPCOMING UNESCO EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING. THE ISRAELIS ARGUED THAT A RESOLUTION SEEKING THE INCLUSION OF ISRAEL IN THE EUROPEAN GROUP WOULD:

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--DEMONSTRATE GOOD INTENTIONS IN THE EXECUTIVE BOARD BUT BE MEANINGLESS IN THE GENERAL SESSION;

--BE VIEWED IN THE US CONGRESS AS EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS ON THE ISRAEL EXCLUSION PROBLEM, POSSIBLY LEADING CONGRESS TO RESCIND "PREMATURELY" EXISTING BANS ON UNESCO FUNDING.

ISRAEL ALSO ASKED THAT BELGIUM NOT RESPOND POSITIVELY TO UNESCO DIRECTOR GENERAL M'BOW'S REQUEST FOR A BELGIAN LOAN TO EASE UNESCO'S CURRENT FINANCIAL PINCH. (CONFIDENTIAL) BRUSSELS 7858, 9/4.)

3. USUN: ALGERIA ON THE DEFENSIVE

WIDESPREAD FAVORABLE REACTION FROM LDC MEMBERS TO THE SECRETARY'S UN SPEECH HAS CAUSED SOME EMBARRASSMENT IN THE ALGERIAN DELEGATION, USUN REPORTS. IN A SEPTEMBER 4 MEETING WITH ALGERIAN PERMREP RAHAL, AMBASSADOR MOYNIHAN:

--CAUSED RAHAL TO SQUIRM BY ALLUDING TO REPORTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE GROUP OF 77 TO THE EFFECT THAT ALGERIA

WANTED THE SPECIAL SESSION TO FAIL;

EMPHASIZED THAT IF THE SESSION FAILED, IT COULD CERTAINLY NOT BE VIEWED AS THE FAULT OF THE US, WHICH HAD PROPOSED SIGNIFICANT INITIATIVES.

RAHAL AGREED THAT THE US HAD OFFERED THE BEST PROPOSALS THUS FAR AND SAID THAT HE WAS SURE THAT A MEETING BETWEEN BOUTEFLIKA AND THE SECRETARY, WHO ARE "OLD FRIENDS," WOULD LEAD TO FAVORABLE RESULTS. (CONFIDENTIAL) USUN 4021 (EXDIS), 9/4.)

4. AMERICANS IN SAIGON TO BE BARGAINING CHIPS?

UPI SAIGON BUREAU MANAGER ALAN DAWSON, ARRIVING IN BANGKOK SEPTEMBER 3, SPECULATED THAT HE WILL BE THE LAST AMERICAN ALLOWED TO LEAVE VIETNAM FOR SOME TIME. HE THINKS THE PRG WILL USE OTHERS AS BARGAINING CHIPS FOR FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS
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WITH THE USG. DAWSON GAVE EMBASSY BANGKOK THE NAMES OF 47 AMERICANS IN SAIGON AND ADDED THAT THEY ARE FREE TO MOVE ABOUT THE CITY WITH THE DESTITUTE RECEIVING MONEY FROM THE RED CROSS. (CONFIDENTIAL) BANGKOK 18529, 9/4.)

5. SUDAN COUP?

EMBASSY KHARTOUM REPORTS THAT RADIO OMDURMAN ANNOUNCED AT 0630 LOCAL SEPTEMBER 5 THAT THE MAY REVOLUTION HAD FAILED, AND THAT THE CABINET, SUDAN SOCIALIST UNION (SSU), PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY, AND THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL HAVE BEEN DIS-SOLVED. KHARTOUM WAS QUIET AT 0200 EDT, WITH ONLY A SLIGHT INCREASE IN MILITARY ACTIVITY. PRESIDENT NIMEIRI'S STATUS IS UNKNOWN.

SUBSEQUENTLY, AP REPORTS RADIO OMDURMAN BROADCAST IN PRESIDENT NIMEIRI'S NAME, A PLEDGE TO CRUSH THE REBELLION.
(UNCLASSIFIED) KHARTOUM 2075, 9/5.) KISSINGER

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